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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT WEDNESDAY, January 24, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "TIPS FOR FAMILY FOOD-SHOPPERS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A. and the Consumers' Counsel, A.A.A.

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Once again here's a glimpse of the food situation in these United States. This glimpse is for the housewife who plans the meals, and buys the food, and likes to know a thing or two about supplies and prices so she can plan and buy wisely.

First, let's have a look at the high points of the food picture at present. Let's begin with milk and eggs. More milk and eggs in this country than at this time last year. Now, a glimpse into the strawberry situation: Strawberries are late this year. The Florida season is slow getting underway. You may have to wait a bit to indulge in much shortcake. Meat is in the picture, too. Look for more beef and more lamb on the market in the next 5 or 6 months. Farmers have been feeding more cattle and lambs for market than they were last year at this time. Finally, about winter fresh vegetables--or fresh winter vegetables, if you prefer. Not so many winter vegetables this year as last, but more than average just the same. This general glimpse of the food picture ought to look pretty good to any one with a good appetite.

During the last half of January fresh winter vegetables come on the market in larger quantities. They come from the southern and far-western States. And this is the time of year when these States are harvesting their big crops of vegetables. The crops this year aren't quite so large as last year, but they're larger than average. Your markets should have plenty of fresh vegetables from now to spring.

This year you can expect more snap beans on the market, more beets and carrots and cauliflower and celery. But you can expect less cabbage and lettuce, less spinach and fewer early new potatoes.

Here's the potato picture from last reports. The prediction is: Not quite so many potatoes coming to market during the first quarter of 1940 as last year. But the second quarter of the year will make up for it and bring more potatoes to market. As every up-and-coming housewife knows, you buy old potatoes mostly from January to April, and then from May on, new potatoes are the major source of supply. The old potatoes now on the market come from storage warehouses in the northern States. The new potatoes in the spring come from the southern States mostly. Not so many old potatoes are in storage now as last winter. But southern farmers are probably putting in more acres of potatoes this winter. If these plantings yield crops average-size or larger, you can have all the potatoes you want in the not too-distant future.

So much for potatoes. Now let's have a few details about strawberries. You know, Florida is the State where the first berries of the year come from. When you see strawberries on the market in January, February and early March, you can make a good guess that they grew in Florida. This year Florida's crop is a third smaller than last year and late beside. Unfavorable growing weather held back the berries.

The other fruit news right now concerns apples and pears. Since the war abroad has stopped the export of our apples and pears to Europe, more of these fruits will be for sale in our markets--more apples especially.

So much for the fruits and vegetables. And now a few words about meat. Let's start with beef. From now until June more better-grade beef will be on the market than last year. Farmers were fattening more cattle to sell in January this year than they've been fattening in any recent year. In fact, the figures on the cattle getting ready for market this winter were some of the largest in the last 20 years.

Now seems to be a good time to eat pork, too. Pork supplies are larger than last year's at this season. But beginning in October 1940 the markets will probably

have less pork for sale. Usually, farmers don't take so many hogs to market after January. But this year the supplies of pork from January to March are likely to be about as large as from October to December.

As for lamb, more grain-fed lamb is coming to market up until March anyway.

And from all reports the hens are still breaking records. They're laying more eggs than they were last year at this time. On January first total egg production was about a tenth larger than last year, and 40 percent above the average production of the past 10 years. And the usual rule is that more and more eggs keep coming on the market until the peak of egg production in April or May.

As for milk and butter. Though milk production this year is larger than last, not so much of it went to make butter. The fluid milk and cream was sold during the year. So butter production figures this winter aren't so high was last winter. But just the same, this country has plenty of butter on hand. In fact, more butter than the average of recent years. Usually butter prices go down after the first of the year. This year the price of butter continued to rise even during January.

And that's all the food tips for today.

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